AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-18 (canceled).

Claim 19. (new): An image handling apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of input interfaces for inputting image data;

a first selector for selecting one of said input interfaces for providing a first image data;

a storage device for storing a plurality of stored images;

a second selector for selecting as a second image data one of said plurality of stored images;

a circuit for combining said first image data and said second image data to produce a third image data; and

a third selector for selecting one of a plurality of receiving devices to receive said third image data;

wherein at least one of said plurality of receiving devices is an image output device.

Claim 20. (new): The apparatus of claim 19, further comprising:

a housing;

wherein said plurality of input interfaces, said storage device, said first selector, said second selector, and said third selector are provided within said housing.

Claim 21. (new): The apparatus of claim 19, wherein said circuit combines said first image data and said second image data by merging said first image data with said second image data.

Claim 22. (new): The apparatus of claim 21, wherein said merging is performed on a pixel-by-pixel basis.

Claim 23. (new): The apparatus of claim 19, wherein at least one of said plurality of stored images is a text message.

Claim 24. (new): The apparatus of claim 19, wherein at least one of said plurality of stored images is a background image.

Claim 25. (new): The apparatus of claim 19, wherein at least one of said plurality of input interfaces is coupled to an image capture device.

Claim 26. (new): The apparatus of claim 25, wherein said image capture device comprise an image scanner.

Claim 27. (new) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein said image capture device comprise a network interface.

Claim 28. (new) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein said image capture device processes an encoded image data.

Claim 29. (new) An image handling method, comprising:

first selecting one of a plurality of input interfaces for receiving a first image data;

second selecting one of a plurality of stored images as a second image data;

combining said first image data and said second image data to produce a third image data;

third selecting one of a plurality of receiving devices to receive said third image data;

wherein at least one of said plurality of receiving devices is an image output device.

Claim 30. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein said combining merges said first image data with said second image data.

Claim 31. (new) The method of claim 30, wherein said merging is performed on a pixel-by-pixel basis.

Claim 32. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein at least one of said plurality of stored images comprises a text message.

Claim 33. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein at least one of said plurality of stored images comprise a background image.

Claim 34. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein said acts of first selecting, second selecting, third selecting, and combining are performed in a common housing.

Claim 35. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein at least one of said input interfaces is coupled to an image capture device.

Claim 36. (new) The method of 35, wherein said image capture device comprise an image scanner.

Claim 37. (new) The method of 36, wherein said image capture device comprise a networked interface.

Claim 38. (new): The method of 37, wherein said image capture device processes encoded image data.